

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action dated September 27, 2004, has been carefully reviewed in light of the Examiner's helpful comments and suggestions.

As a result of the Office Action, claims 1-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Figure 12 in view of U.S. 5,205,546 to Schisler. This combination has been carefully reviewed but is not believed to show or suggest Applicants' invention as now claimed in any manner. Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims is therefore respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

According to MPEP 2143.03, to establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. By the above amendments, claims 1 and 12 have been amended to recite that the lock mechanism serves to lock the orifice casing and the retaining cover together without substantial movement relative to each other in an axial direction as the orifice casing and the retaining cover rotate relative to each other about an axis.

With this arrangement, the axial lengths of the orifice casing and the retaining cover can be reduced. In addition, the unlocking and locking operations can be easily performed, because the rotation of the orifice casing or the retainer cover can be made while maintaining the position of the orifice casing and the retainer cover relative to each other in the axial direction.

As the Examiner concedes, the prior art shown in FIG. 12 does not teach the lock mechanism. Schisler, as best seen in FIG. 4, shows and teaches a disk shaped decoupler 82 as an alternative embodiment of a decoupler 46 shown in FIGS. 1 to 3.

In this alternative embodiment, as a clamp ring 94 is screwed into a body member 84, an annular rib 90 engages with an annular groove 92, so that a diaphragm 88 is clamped between the clamp ring 94 and the body member 84 (see the description at column 5, lines 28 to 41).

Moreover, the Examiner has taken a position that it would have been obvious to one skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a rotational lock mechanism as taught by Schisler in the device of Figure 12 in order to ease assembly. Applicants respectfully disagree and traverse the Section 103 obviousness rejection in view of the following remarks.

As noted by the Examiner, the lock mechanism of Schisler is constituted by threads that are projections. Therefore, as the clamp ring 94 and the body member 84 rotate relative to each other, the claim ring 94 and the body member 84 move toward each other in the axial direction in order to clamp the diaphragm 88. Thus, the relative rotation of the clamp ring 94 and the body member 84 inevitably causes the axial movement between the clamp ring 94 and the body member 84.

Further, the clamp ring 94 and the body member 84 of Schisler must have radially opposing portions that extend along a predetermined length in the axial direction in order to form threads. Thus, the clamp ring 94 and the body member 84 must have long axial lengths.

Moreover, in order to form the threads on the clamp ring 94 and the body member 84, a troublesome machining operation including a number of machining steps is required for forming each of the clamp ring and the body member.

Otherwise, an injection molding process using a mold with a complicated construction is required.

None of the other cited (but not relied upon) prior art references teaches or suggests a lock mechanism that can lock an orifice casing and a retaining cover without relative axial movement of the orifice casing and the retaining cover of the claimed invention.

Furthermore, claims 2 and 13 recite the detailed construction of the lock mechanism and the detailed steps of the locking operation. As clearly recited in these claims, in order to lock the orifice casing and the retaining cover to each other, the engaging edge of the second engaging member engages the engaging recess of the first engaging member as the retaining cover and the orifice plate rotate relative to each other after the engaging projection of the first engaging member has been inserted into the projection receiving portion of the engaging hole of the second engaging member. Neither Schisler, nor the other cited prior art references disclose or teach these limitations and features.

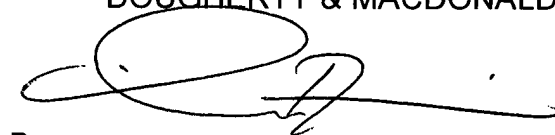
Also, neither Schisler, nor the other cited prior art references disclose or teach the rotational prevention wall opposing to the engaging edge in the rotational direction in order to prevent the retaining cover from rotating further after engagement of the engaging edge with the engaging recess, as claimed in claim 3. Further, neither Schisler, nor the other cited prior art references, disclose or teach a plurality of first engaging members spaced from each other in the circumferential direction and a plurality of second engaging members corresponding to the first

engaging members. Therefore, in view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are patentable over the prior art.

Each issue raised in the Office Action dated September 27, 2004, has been addressed and it is believed that claims 1-13 are in condition for allowance.

Wherefore, Applicants respectfully request a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Amir H. Behnia', written over a horizontal line.

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